

A Case Study on the Marriage System of the Saura Tribe of Rayagada District of Odisha

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Abstract

The main aim of the current study is the marriage system among the Saura tribe of Rayagada district of Odisha. This study has been providing almost all the authentic information about the Saura tribe of Rayagada district of Odisha. This research work is an examination to bring out to the limelight the historical evidence of the Saura marriage system. They have a unique culture, religious traditions, customs followed since early times. Among the culture and traditions are interconnected with the Saura's life cycle and, marriage is an essential part of the Saura community. They followed the different types of marriages such as marriage by negotiation, marriage by elopement, marriage by capture, and marriage by agreement. Due to modernization, there has been a slight change in the marriages of the Sauras. This current study also highlighted the socio-cultural condition of the Saura tribe.

Keywords: Unique, Saura, Birinda, Mahua tree, Intoxicant, Marriage.

Introduction

Scheduled Tribes are the indigenous aboriginal in India. They are belonging to different social stocks, speak the language of different families, and show considerable variation in their basic economy. Economically they are almost vulnerable among the weaker sections of the community. According to the 2011 census the tribal population comprises 8.65 crores constituting 8.61 percent of the total population of India. There are 489 tribal communities including the sub-tribes that are spreading all over the Indian subcontinent. The Tribal India alive in the forest hills and naturally inaccessible regions known as a rule by different meaning either the people of forest and hill or the original aboriginal, and so on. They have different types of sub names such Vanayajati (*Castes of forest*), Adimjati (*Primitive tribe*), Anusuchit Janjati (*Scheduled tribe*) all these terms Adivasi is known most widely, and Scheduled Tribe is the constitutional name (Vidyarthi,1976).

Marriage is the basic institution of Indian society and it has been considered to be the foundation of Indian society. Marriage is the most important social institution, in which the relationship between a man and woman is approved by the society approved. This relationship is defined and recommended by custom and law. Besides the sexual need of life, the need for the worry and rearing of children and also the transmission of culture constitutes further important motives for marriage institutions. Marital bond is the same everywhere.

The Saura also known as Saora, Sabar, or Sawara is the most prominent tribal community of Odisha. They are found in most of the districts, yet their main home ground extended from the Gajapati and Rayagada districts. The Aitareya Brahmana mentions the Sabara as an ancient ethnic tribe and also

the Mahabharata places them in the Deccan while the Puranas locate them in the south. Ptolemy mentions a country called Sabari which is generally held indistinguishable from the aboriginal by the Sabaras. The Sauras are one of the oldest ethnic tribes of Odisha having a population of 5,34,751 as per the 2011 census.

Their marriage system is very simple in nature. There are different forms of marriages by negotiation, elopement and capture, marriage by arrangement, and also Polygamy is more prevalent in their society. In the Saura society, the daughter of the maternal uncle is the most preferred bride. The family, relatives and the groom play a big role in this arranged marriage. The marriage is decided according to the socio-economic stability of the two families. A man of a lower Birinda marries a woman of a higher Birinda with a generous offering of liquor (*Ali*) to the bride's father. After that the boy's father along with the relatives visit the girl's house with a pot of liquor. If the girl accepts the marriage proposal, then the wine is drunk in the presence of relatives or the elders' members of the villagers. Marriage is an important part of Saura's life. It is a customary observance between a man and woman and the life cycle of Saura passes through such rituals (*Niyamalen*) and events such as conception, birth, nomenclature, childhood, marriage, old age and death.

Aims of Research

- To analyse the of tribe
- To study the different types of marriage among the Saura
- To study the impact of modernization on the Saura tribe

Methodology

To make a methodical study on the marriage system of the Saura tribe of Rayagada of Odisha the investigator adopted an appropriate method of data collection for the Ethno-historical study which contains- interview with people, data collection from different sources both primary and secondary data.

Different types of tribal marriage:

Marriage is an institution between two individuals belonging to different sex with the approval of the society. Marriage plays an important role for a society so no one can think of family. Tribal marriage can be classified into the following types:

Monogamy (*Aboi Sirung*)

Monogamy is a form of marriage in which the practice is to have one agnate at one time. In this marriage a man can marry a woman and man vice versa since the beginning of Vedic civilization monogamy also respectable place in the society the Ramayana puts special focus on monogamy.

Polygamy (*Jobar Sirung*)

Polygamy in the form of marriage which is widely prevailed as it increases the workforce of the family enabling the person to clear more caption Padu fields, thus helping to increase the economic condition of the family. A man can marry more than one wife in this marriage is called polygamy and a woman can marry more than one husband is called polyandry. Again, it has been subdivided into two parts.

Polygyny

It is a form of marriage in which a man can marry more than one woman to get financial support and more profit in hereditary occupation. For example, Kantia, a wealthy Middle man of Sriballabhapur village opined that he had to marry two wives to have more children for inheritable and look after his vast property of land. But now Kantia manages a peaceful and cooperative relationship between the two wives and he stays in one house. According to his statement, as his first wife had no children, he married his second time his sister-in-law (*Aliboi*) and she became a mother of two children.

Marriage system in Saura

Marriage plays vital a role in the cultural traditions of the Sauras. In this marriage generally a Saura boy and girl gets married at the age of 18 to 21 years. There are many types of marriage such as:

i) Marriage by negotiation (*Meeting*)

Saura villages are tied together with a close network of information and communication. Due to weekly markets (*Sainta*) all the villagers came in regular personal contacts with each other. In the corner of the market idea and information are exchanged between elderly women about the countenance brides and grooms of the neighbouring villages.

Negotiation is made particularly within families having more or less equal socio-economic standing. The impediment is otherwise very rarely declared in the case where a rich man's (*Gomang*) lineage has an affinal relationship with a poor, labour-class lineage.

Marrying the maternal uncle's daughter is a common practice in the Saura community this is possible when the uncle has a daughter. The marriage is arranged by the parents or relatives of the boy and girl. Before the marriage is being settled between two families, it is finalized through the mediator known as madhyasti (*Madhyabarti*) and the relatives of both sides. The marriage proposal comes from the boy's side as the girl's side is thought to be superior. The boy and his family members look for pretty and working capacities in the would-be bride. The bride (*Kangboi*) should be young enough to overwork in the fields of her husband for lifetimes. Most significantly his economic well-being is determined in terms of primary cultivable fields (*Sroba*) so that his daughter faces no financial or food crisis in her in-law's home. This appearance that girls are given is more noteworthy in tribal society. When the proposal is finalized, the elder members from the side of the girl visit to see the bridegroom's house. In the process of marriage, the potential groom visits the bride's home along with his intimate friends to see the bride. They were well treated and served a good non-veg meal. The marriage mostly settles in January to April, because these are suitable months for them and they also invite all the relatives of both sides.

ii) Rituals in Marriage Negotiation:

Wine (*Ali*) is the most essential article for marriage that used to be the oldest customary law of negotiation. In this process, the boy's father his *birinda* members, and village elders visit the girl's house with a pot full of Mahua liquor (*Abasal*). In the absence of the girl's family members at home, they secretly take the wine to the roof of the girl's house and hang the wine (*Ali*) pot on the corner of the house. This act is carried out, particularly in the afternoon time. Anomie is maintained to avoid gratification and loss due to the non-acknowledgment of the proposal by the girl's family.

After that, the family members of the girl become aware of the proposal. If the proposal is accepted to be a countenance option for the girl, then the wine is shared by the family members and as well neighbours. In public it is declared that the wine was thrown away and was not accepted. In this customary law rejection of the proposal in public proclaim the higher social standing of the girls and their family members.

After a week or month wine is again brought by the boy's family for the second round. In this process, they express strong intention, avidness, and activeness of purpose to have a marital relationship with the girl's family. This is a significant stage in which her brothers and parents ask the girl for her opinion. The finalization and acceptance of the proposal for marriage rest with the girl. This demonstrates the position of Saura women and they have the freedom to choose their life partners.

After getting of invitation from the girl's house for working out the marriage adhesion, the boy's coalition consisting of some elderly people from the village comes to the girl's house with more liquor on that day. The woman of the potential groom often accompanies the coalition and remained at a distance from the site where discussions between the parties are held. To make the marriage adhesion publicly granted and accepted, the village elders along with the relatives have discussions at the Sudasing (*Majhi kutta*) of the girl's house and share the intoxicant. During this occasion, the girl spoke her opinion in Infront of elders. According to the boys, the side accommodates bringing intoxicants a couple of times before the wedding.

iii) **Marriage by Elopement (*Sole Irleji*)**

Nowadays this type of marriage is widely prevalent in Saura society. Usually, this marriage favours both the boys and girls and they secretly run away from home and get married without the permission of the family. After they escape secretly, boys and girls hide at their relative's house or somewhere else. Then they are found by family and relatives and brought back home. Finally, the Saura society gives recognition to them to live together. Eventually, both the clans meet and negotiate between them. They go to the brahmin priest one day to cast the auspicious day and finalize the date. Then both families invite their relatives, friends and companions. On that day, both the boy and the girl enter the house of the girl and both sides organize a feast called *Kothamadani (Jungboilinji)*.

iv) **Marriage by capture or force (*Dingle Pangleji*)**

This is a marriage in which the boy is taken without the permission of the girl. It is usually held at a weekly market or traditional festivals etc. the girl is picked up by the boy and his companions. After that for a few days, both boys and girls flee to their relative's house or friend's house to protect themselves till the marriage is ceremonially approved. After this process is completed, the girl is given new clothes at the boy's house.

v) **Marriage by Agreement (*Subalinji*)**

These types of marriage rarely prevail in the Saura communities. This kind of marriage was by agreement, the Saura boys or girls were getting married out of caste. In generally if a girl marries a boy of other caste, the parents and relatives were preparing the regulation for the safety of their girl it is important for them. A bride and groom are invited to the house which is called *Kothamadani (Jungboilinji)*. In this ceremony, both sides organize the feast for the guest.

vi) **Love marriage: (*Manadalegi Jirileji*)**

Kinship ties and affinal accord require the coming of representatives from different villages for dancing and feasting in mortuary ceremonies, the relationships develop between young men and women on these occasions. The young people form and develop liaisons, particularly during reciprocal work parties when men and women may emergent down tools and chase and elate each other. They work together since childhood years in adjoining hill sites, and youngsters develop accessibility, which often grows into setting as life partners.

vii) Widow remarriage (*Juare Pankuiniti Barbotar*)

A widow remarriage can accept in the Saura society and most likely, the former is married to her younger brother-in-law (*junior levirate, Irising*) if any. It is sometimes this marriage draws the avarice of the angry Sonum (*Deity*) in this case the spirit of her dead husband who may unhappiness the partners with repeated illness. This person who wants to marry the deceased's spouse should make friends with the resting soul by performing religious rites and rituals.

viii) Divorce: (*Chadapatratiyeti*)

According to Saura's custom, the marital band is a sacred band that should be kept integral till the passing of one of the partners so that the heritable spirits and deities are satisfied. They have faith that any breach of trust between the husbands affecting their marital ties displeases the supernatural. So, they forcefully criticized divorce. However, the Saura society grants divorce under certain pressing circumstances due to the unwillingness of either of the parents of both to continue as man and wife. In Saura society, divorce is a simple affair, without having any ceremony a woman, dissatisfied with matrimony, can simply leave her husband's house and go to the parental home or another man.

The Sauras have been influenced by the Bhakti cult. At some places people have now begun to lose faith in their Purpur (*Worship*). Traditionally they have a separate marriage system is called Medir (*Marriage*) but due to influence of modernization the Saura is being adopted and a Brahmin is invited for marriage ceremonies and death rituals. The current study of some villages of Rayagada from a Saura area, which is, incidentally one of the few village studies from the tribal area, records the emergence of the caste system who, in the due course of time, they have accepted the modern life style (Vidyarthi, 1966).

Impact of Christianity has been assimilated, by way of conversion, in western India. Christianity is the major factors of religions customs and tradition change among the tribals from the British rule in India. The patronage and assistance of the British Government, and above all the least resistance from the tribals owing to their deplorable conditions, certain areas in the different parts of tribal India and certain major tribal groups became Christian during the last one century. The initially stage of conversion started at separate family level and was an uphill task, so that it took place within the few years ago convert the Christianity among the Sauras in Rayagada. Sometimes Christianity has worked as a force of fission in disintegrating the aboriginal tribal organization in terms of the appearance of caste like groups, it has also functioned as a force of combination to consolidate inter-tribal social and religious attraction on the various denominational and religious levels. There are different tribes come together under the same religious leadership and the network of the Church. A large number of cases of inter-tribal marriages within the members of the same denominations have been reported from among the Saura.

Since the arrival of the British in India, there have been many changes in the religious sphere. The British took many steps to promote and spread their Christianity. According to the change of time, that religion began to be practiced throughout India. India being a Hindu nation many rituals and principles are followed but a large number of people adopted Christianity. From that day, the tribals abandoned their traditions and started following the traditions of the Western countries. Due to this change in the religious field, the people of the Saura tribe have been greatly affected. The Sauras who has converted to Christianity have changed their traditional customs in the area of marriage, and dress patterns. The methods of worshipping the Sauras are gradually disappearing. Modernization is true but the all festival that was predicted by Sauras is diminishing day by day.

Conclusion

Marriage as an institution is very important in the social structure of Saura society has gone through several changes in the course of its changing socio-cultural history. Some of the important rituals during the celebration of marriage are still followed and has maintained the purity of cultural significance of the Saura society. Due to the influence of western culture and the spread of education on the tribal areas, the tribals changed their religious customs traditions and marriage systems. The unique culture of the Saura has undergone changes under the influence of modernization. The educated families adopted the new methods of marriage system which has been crossed the blind believe and rituals of the Saura. Since the arrival of the British in India there have been many changes in the religious sphere. The British took many steps to promote and spread their Christianity. The methods of marriage of the Sauras are gradually disappearing and due to modernization, all the festivals observed by the Saura has lost the authenticity and glory of the rich indigenous society.

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